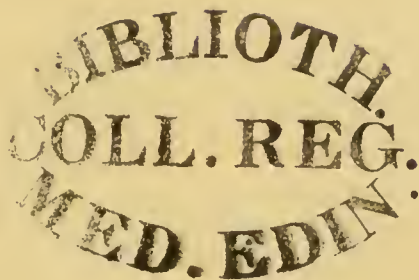


# PHARMACY IN SWEDEN.



BY

DR. N. P. HAMBERG,

Assistant Professor of Pharmacy to the Royal Caroline Institution, and to the Pharmaceutical  
Institution of Stockholm.

LONDON :

PRINTED BY C. WHITING, BEAUFORT HOUSE, STRAND.

---

MDCCCLI,

R55363

## PHARMACY IN SWEDEN.

BY DR. N. P. HAMBERG.

As the Pharmaceutic Journal already contains various articles upon the state of Pharmacy in different countries, and as the Editor has expressed a wish to have an article upon Pharmacy in Sweden, I have very great pleasure in communicating my knowledge upon the subject, hoping, that if the notice is in some degree incomplete, it will be excused, inasmuch as it is written from memory.

In Sweden, as well as in many other countries, it has been the object of Government, by laws and other regulations, to provide that the people for a fixed moderate price, should obtain unadulterated medicines; and by means of limiting the number of shops, and preventing quacks or other incompetent persons from interfering in the Pharmaceutical trade, have secured for the Apothecaries or Dispensing Chemists (*Apothekare*) a sufficient competence.

That the attention of the Swedish Government for a long time has been directed to Pharmacy is plain, from a royal resolution passed in the year 1663, which commands the publication of a Pharmacopœia (*Pharmakopé*) and a price list of medicines (*Medicinal Taxa*). The first Pharmacopœia was published some years afterwards (1686), under the name of "Pharmacopœia Galenochymica," and about the same time a price list of medicines.

The first edition of Pharmacopœia Suecica was published in 1775, and new editions according to the progress of science from that time to 1845, which is the sixth and last edition. The Swedish Pharmacopœia is written only in Latin.

COLLEGIUM MEDICUM.—The superintendence and inspection of the Pharmaceutical as well as of the Medical establishments in Sweden are committed to the charge of a Collegium Medicum (*Konglig Sundhets Collegium*), whose members (*Medicinal Råd*) are nominated by the King; and every candidate for this office must be a Doctor of Medicine, whose degree has been obtained by passing an examination.

APPRENTICESHIP.—Any youth who may wish to enter as apprentice in an Apothecary's shop, must be fifteen years of age, and ought to have gone through a school-course of History, Geography, Mathematics, Latin, and Modern Languages.

ASSISTANT, OR PHARMACIÆ STUDIOSUS.—The Apothecary must announce the name of the apprentice for registration in the Collegium Medicum, and provide for his instruction in Botany, Chemistry, and Pharmacy during the apprenticeship, which lasts from three to four years; and after which time the student is authorized to pass an examination in Botany, Chemistry, Pharmacy, Latin, and Modern Languages. This examination must be passed in Stockholm, in the Apothecaries' Society (*Apothekare Societeten*), and in the country before the official Physician of the province, together with the Apothecary who is the master of the apprentice. After this examination his oath is taken in compliance with the law and the official Pharmaceutical regulations, and he is now declared "*Pharmacæ Studiosus*," and capable of exercising the functions of an Assistant in a shop, and also answerable for the prescriptions prepared by him; and by way of a check he must always sign his name to the label of the prescription.

(The apprentice or scholar is not answerable, and in consequence not allowed

to prepare any prescriptions, he may sell innocent medicines only, as elder and chamomile flowers, juniper-berry, gummi acaciæ, &c.)

**PHARMACEUTICAL INSTITUTION.**—After serving as an Assistant in a shop for three years, and producing a testimonial of the fact, he may now enter as Pupil at the Pharmaceutical Institution (*Pharmaceutiska Institutet*) in Stockholm, and there attend the lectures which are read in Botany, Materia Medica, and Pharmaceutical Chemistry, from the beginning of October to the end of May, with a few weeks vacations at Christmas. At the same time he must work two days a week in the operations of the laboratory.

The fees for the lectures and the course in the laboratory are together about £1. The Pupil has free admission to the lectures in Zoology, Botany, Materia Medica, and Chemistry at the Royal Caroline Institution (*Konglig Carolinska Institutet*), and to the excursions of the Assistant Professor of Botany, which take place during the summer months, May, June, July, and August, in the environs of Stockholm.

After finishing the course in the laboratory, the duration of which depends upon the capacity of the Pupil, he may request a private trial (*tentamen*) by the Professors in the prescribed branches of science, viz., Botany, Zoology, Materia Medica, Theoretical and Pharmaceutical Chemistry, and Toxicology.

If he can present in the Collegium Medicum a certificate from the Professors of their satisfaction with the trial, a day will be appointed for examination, which is conducted by two Professors at the Royal Caroline Institution, and two of the Apothecaries in Stockholm before a member of the Collegium Medicum. During the examination, whoever wishes, is allowed to be present, and all the questions are registered in a book kept for that purpose, and a note made whether or not the answers are correct. And the examiners express the merits of the candidates by the following different terms: *laudatur, cum laude approbatur, approbatur, cum approbatione admittitur*, and last of all, *admittitur*.

The examination is not passed unless the candidate receive the approbatur of all the examiners.

**PROVISOR AND APOTHECARY.**—After the examinee has taken an oath before the Collegium Medicum to comply with the laws and pharmaceutical regulations, he is declared "Provisor and Apothecary," and obtains a diploma to that effect. He is now at liberty to purchase by agreement an Apothecary's shop, if one becomes vacant, or through nomination, if a new one is required in any part of the country.

The right (*privilegium*) of dispensing medicines in a shop, properly procurable by personal permission from the Government, and which should cost only about 4 or £5 for the diploma, has become a traffic, and the price has gradually risen to such an extent, that at the present time the *privilegium*, or good-will of one of the best shops, is sold for about £3000—a sum beyond the reach of a poor though clever student.

Those who have been interested in the success of Pharmacy in Sweden, have proposed to mortgage (*amortisera*) the privileges by a loan; but their benevolent endeavours have been stranded by the difficulty of procuring so large a sum of money necessary for mortgaging the privileges over the whole of Sweden.

When a person through purchase or inheritance has become possessed of an Apothecary's shop, he must announce it in the Collegium Medicum in order to obtain from the Government confirmation of the privilege for himself.

If in any part of the country a new shop is required, the Collegium Medicum announce it, and propose three of the most deserving candidates. The Government nominates one of them. It is for the most part in country places, at a distance from any town, that new Apothecaries' shops are allowed for the convenience of the public. In the larger towns, on the contrary, they are rarely permitted.

The number of Apothecaries' shops in Stockholm is fourteen, to a population of 90,000. No new shop has been permitted during the last twenty years, as the number has been found more than sufficient. For in Sweden, as in many



other countries, it is observed that the larger number of inhabitants and the fewer shops the better are the medicines.

The Apothecaries have, in consequence, a sufficient competence ensured in their calling, and are not compelled to enter into other trades. Hence it is they love their profession, and by dispensing medicines of the best quality, strive to obtain the confidence of the authorities and the public. On the contrary, if the number of shops is very large—or, still worse, unlimited—the Apothecary or Chemist cannot gain a subsistence from his profession, and is, therefore, obliged to seek in other trades what he cannot find in his own; and Pharmacy, instead of being the main object, is reduced to an insignificant rank, and reflects no credit upon its followers.

Under such a system, if each Apothecary train up one or more Assistants, the number of candidates for shops will in time become extravagantly large, and the difficulty of controlling them increases in the same proportion.

(Some of the Apothecaries in Sweden have endeavoured in consequence, to employ Assistants only, and no Apprentices, in order to obviate too great competition).

**THE APOTHECARIES' SHOPS (APOTHEK).**—The shops in the towns are for the most part large, and internally are often arranged with considerable elegance. The laboratory, according to the regulations, must contain a steam apparatus for preparing decoctions, extracts, aromatic oils and waters, &c.

Decoctions and infusions must be prepared *extempore*.

Tinctures must be kept in a room in which the temperature is not under 15° Celsius, in order that the dissolved materials may not be precipitated by the cold.

Native vegetables must be renewed every year, and the old stock destroyed.

The best medicines, if there are several kinds in commerce, must always be written for.

Every shop has a sign of its own, derived from some animal or other object. To each medicine prepared according to a prescription must be attached a label, on which is the name of the shop.

The so-called homœopathic Apothecaries' shops do not exist in Sweden. They are not necessary, inasmuch as homœopathy does not seem likely to be long-lived there, and will soon become an historical curiosity. It is very probable—indeed, I believe it—that in Sweden as in other countries, many hysterical ladies, or *malades imaginaires*, male as well as female, have perhaps derived comfort from the potential homœopathic sugar-grains and interesting conversations with the homœopathic long-suffering Physician. But Swedes, in general, do not like this kind of medicine; no foreign, and only one Swedish Physician practises homœopathy in Stockholm, and, in the country, I believe, not a single one.

**PRESCRIPTIONS (RECEPTER) AND THE PRICE-LIST OF MEDICINES (MEDICINAL TAXA).**—The Chemist must put on every prescription the price, which must be according to the rate of the price-list at that time. The Swedish price-list of medicines is revised every year, and the price of medicines is changed according to the market price of the drugs.

Medicines for external use ought to have a coloured label, and powerful medicines are to be sealed.

The Chemist must prepare medicines according to the Swedish Pharmacopœia, unless the Physician has (*expressis verbis*) prescribed otherwise. The Chemist is forbidden to prepare prescriptions of other than Physicians who are allowed to practise in Sweden; and a list of them is every year published by Collegium Medicum.

As a Physician is not allowed to keep an Apothecary's shop, because he has no Pharmaceutical diploma, so the Chemist is not allowed to practise in medicine: the privilege of that is granted only to such persons as have gone through a complete medical course at any of the Swedish Universities in Upsala or Lund, or at the Medico-Chirurgical Academy of the Royal Caroline Institution

in Stockholm. To gain admission into the last-mentioned Academy, the student must have passed at some of the Universities a philosophical and philological examination.

Foreign Physicians, unless they can present a diploma as Doctor of Medicine from a well-known University, are not allowed to practise medicine in Sweden without a so-called colloquium familiare in the Collegium Medicum, or medical course at the Royal Caroline Institution.

As the time of the Apothecary is not employed in medical practice, and as his competence is sufficient, he can, if he loves science, employ his spare hours with tranquillity in working in that branch of science which he most affectionately embraces.

If, in general, a greater scientific activity of the Pharmaceutical profession in Sweden is to be desired, we must, however, with pleasure remember that private individuals, distinguished in other countries for original scientific researches, have been met with and are still to be found in Sweden. I will only here mention the most distinguished:—For about a century ago lived in Köping (a very small, and, for the greatest part of the world, unknown town in Sweden) an Apothecary and Chemist, who, with great eagerness, was labouring in Chemistry. The good burghers in Köping very likely thought him a clever Apothecary, but none of them could foretell that their diligent friend the Chemist, *Carl Wilhelm (Charles William) Scheele*, in his small insignificant shop, was operating with experiments the result of which should astonish the whole scientific world.

**INSPECTION OF THE SHOPS.**—The Chemists' shops in Sweden must, according to the regulations, be inspected every year. These inspections are performed in Stockholm by two professors or assistant-professors to the Royal Caroline Institution, in presence of two Members of Collegium Medicum, and in the country of the official Physician of the province, together with a magistrate.

As the official Physician of the province has not time enough for Pharmacognosy, the Collegium Medicum has of late proposed to the Government a change in inspecting the shops in the country, so that, as in some part of Germany, the whole country will be divided into a certain number of districts, and every district obtain a travelling inspector.

Should the inspector find any adulterated or bad medicine it must be immediately destroyed.

If an Apothecary is three times found to have sold adulterated medicines, he directly loses his privilege, and must give up his shop to another person.

It is at the same time a duty and a satisfaction for me to state, that medicines in Sweden are commonly very good, and when adulterated articles are met with are usually such as are imported.

Poisons, or other noxious medicines, which in the Swedish Pharmacopœia have this mark  $\text{S}$ , must not be sold without a sufficient prescription, which ought to be retained by the Chemist, and not repeated without a note from the Physician.

Poisoning is, consequently, very rare in Sweden, and when practised it is commonly by means of white arsenic, which has probably been obtained from a glass manufactory.

Secret medicines are forbidden in Sweden, in spite of which charlatans try to sell secretly their all-relieving medicines, but they seem more and more to lose the confidence of the public, and their credit, too, sinks in the same proportion as the reputation of the scientific Physician increases.

---



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2016

<https://archive.org/details/b28043261>

